

Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY COLOMBO

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: OGEN, CE

SUBJECT: TRAVEL TO SRI LANKA BY FRIENDS AND FAMILY OF EMBASSY
PERSONNEL, JULY 15 - AUGUST 25

1. DEPARTMENT HAS BEEN APPROACHED BY SRI LANKA EMBASSY FOR COOPERATION IN FACILITATING TRAVEL TO SRI LANKA DURING JULY 15 - AUGUST 25 PERIOD OF FAMILY MEMBERS AND FRIENDS OF AMEMBASSY PERSONNEL RESIDENT IN COLOMBO. AS POST IS AWARE GSL WILL BE IMPOSING INCREASINGLY STRINGENT VISA RESTRICTIONS ON PROSPECTIVE TRAVELLERS TO SRI LANKA BEGINNING JUNE 1 AND ENDING ONLY ON AUGUST 25. BURDEN ON CEYLONese EMBASSY IN WASHINGTON TO PROCESS VISA REQUESTS IS VERY HEAVY AND CURRENT INSTRUCTIONS ALLOW LITTLE FLEXIBILITY IN INTERPRETING OR STRETCHING THEM. PROBLEMS MAY THEREFORE ARISE FOR INDIVIDUALS STATING AN INTEREST IN VISITING PERSONNEL AT POST DURING JULY AND AUGUST.

2. WHEREVER FEASIBLE, AMEMBASSY PERSONNEL ANTICIPATING VISITS AT ANY TIME JULY 15 - AUGUST 25 SHOULD EITHER: (1) REQUEST MDFA TO INSTRUCT GSL EMBASSY IN WASHINGTON TO ISSUE VISA TO INDIVIDUAL IDENTIFIED BY NAME; (2) CORRESPOND DIRECTLY WITH GSL EMBASSY ADVISING IT IN ADVANCE OF NAMES OF THEIR VISITORS; OR (3) REQUEST NEA/INS TO INFORM EMBASSY OF NAMES

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PROSPECTIVE VISITORS. WHATEVER OPTION PREFERRED, NECESSARY

INFORMATION SHOULD INCLUDE: NAME OF PERSON TO BE VISITED AT POST, NATURE OF RELATIONSHIP OF VISITOR (FAMILY OR FRIEND), AND DATES OF VISIT. THIS REQUEST APPLIES EQUALLY TO VISITORS WHOSE STAY IN SRI LANKA MAY BEGIN EARLIER THAN JULY 15 OR END LATER THAN AUGUST 25. REFERENCE HERE IS ONLY TO VISITORS WHO WILL BE PRIVATELY ACCOMMODATED WITHIN THE EMBASSY. A LETTER ADDRESSED DIRECTLY TO CEYLONSE EMBASSY BY A FRIEND OR FAMILY MEMBER (FOR INSTANCE, WITH PASSPORT ENCLOSED) REQUESTING A VISA IS INSUFFICIENT AS EMBASSY LACKS MEANS OF VOUCHING FOR ACCURACY OF RELATIONSHIP THAT IS CLAIMED. THESE REQUESTS MAY INFORMALLY BE REFERRED TO NEA/INS OR, MORE LIKELY, TO MDFA, COLOMBO.

3. CEYLONSE EMBASSY SAYS THAT NO PROBLEM IN ISSUING VISA THROUGH AUGUST 25 WILL ARISE WHERE FAMILY MEMBERS ARE INVOLVED. HOWEVER, FRIENDS WILL BE ABLE TO OBTAIN VISAS, IF VOUCHERED FOR IN MANNER DESCRIBED ABOVE, WITHOUT REFERENCE BY THE GSL EMBASSY TO MDFA, COLOMBO ONLY FOR VISITS ENDING JULY 31. IN CASES WHERE FRIEND'S VISIT MAY EXTEND INTO AUGUST VISA REQUESTS WILL NEED TO BE REFERRED TO COLOMBO. LONG DELAYS IN RESPONDING TO THESE VISA REQUESTS MAY BE SAFETY ASSUMED.

4. IN ORDER TO ENSURE ORDER AND EFFICIENCY WE SUGGEST THAT POST SUBMIT ON REGULAR BASIS CONSOLIDATED LIST OF ANTICIPATED VISITORS AS OUTLINED ABOVE WITH AS MUCH LEAD TIME AS POSSIBLE. DESK WILL THEN FORWARD NAMES TO SRI LANKA EMBASSY. EVERY EFFORT SHOULD BE MADE TO AVOID LAST MINUTE VISA REQUESTS DURING JULY AND AUGUST.

5. WE STRESS THAT PROCEDURES OUTLINED ABOVE APPLY ONLY WHERE VISA REQUEST IS TO BE PROCESSED IN WASHINGTON. THIS INCLUDES PHYSICAL HANDLING OF PASSPORT. OTHER CEYLONSE MISSIONS MAY ADOPT LESS COOPERATIVE APPROACH; IN INSTANCES WHERE VISITOR TRAVEL AND VISA REQUEST WILL ORIGINATE OUTSIDE U.S. BEST APPROACH MAY BE TO WORK THROUGH MDFA. WE GATHER THAT UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES WILL AIRPORT VISAS BE GRANTED, HOWEVER CLOSE THE RELATIONSHIP TO PERSONNEL OR SECURE THE ACCOMMODATION ARRANGEMENTS. ROBINSON

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